

EPIDEMIOLOGY NEWSLETTER

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***BORDETELLA PERTUSSIS* TESTING BY PCR NOW AVAILABLE**

The Nevada State Health Laboratory has announced that laboratory testing for *Bordetella pertussis* by polymerase chain reaction (PCR) is now available. This highly sensitive test detects as few as 2-5 organisms in a single specimen. Following is a list of criteria for submitting samples:

Preferred specimen:	Nasopharyngeal swab (dacron swab is preferred)
Other acceptable	Nasopharyngeal swab (cotton or rayon - calcium alginate is not acceptable)
Minimum requirement:	Two dacron swabs
Specimen container:	Flexible dacron swab and sterile dry transport tube (available from lab)
Specimen identification:	Label transport tube with patient's first and last names and date and time of collection
Specimen collection:	Guide the flexible swab into the contour of the nares and into the nasopharynx. Leave swab in place for 30 seconds while rotating swab. Remove swab. Place swab in sterile dry transport tube without media and transport to lab within 24 hours. For longer periods, store frozen at -20°C or below. Repeat procedure. Two swabs are required.
Storage and Shipping:	Store and ship refrigerated at 2-8°C. Transport to lab as soon as possible.
Turn-around-time:	48 hours

An additional swab will be necessary if a *pertussis* culture is ordered. Please call (775) 688-1335 for more information on PCR testing or culture. Nevada State law requires that positive *B. pertussis* cases be reported. The Health District also requests that **probable** *pertussis* cases be reported. To report, please call (702) 383-1378 or fax information to (702) 383-4936.

DOG CHEW PRODUCTS WARNING

In July 1999, Health Canada became aware of seven human cases of *Salmonella infantis* infections associated with handling pig ear dog treats. This industry in Canada is currently not regulated. Health Canada did an investigation and found that children were at greatest risk of infection. One third of cases were less than two years of age and 48% of cases were less than 10 years of age. They also found that many different serotypes of *Salmonella* were cultured from these products. No cases of *Salmonella infantis* have been reported in Clark County this year.

Canada does distribute these products in the United States. The U.S. FDA has issued a nationwide public health warning alerting consumers of the potential risk related to contact with dog chew products made from pork- or beef-derived materials (e.g., pig ears, beef jerky treats, smoked hooves, pig skins, etc.).

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It is not clear if human infections are related to direct handling of these animal products, contamination of the environment by these products, or contact with an infected or colonized dog. Physicians are encouraged to educate their patients to wash their hands thoroughly with warm water and soap after handling these products and to keep them out of the hands of children. If *Salmonella* is suspected, physicians should order a stool culture. Please report cases of *Salmonellosis* to the Office of Epidemiology at (702) 383-1378 or fax information to (702) 383-4936.

Dogs also are susceptible to *Salmonella* infection and pet owners should consider discontinuing use of these treats until further information on their safety is available.

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